

FOR RELEASE: September 11, 2000

Paul Urges House Leadership to Set Vote to Provide for Voluntary Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Washington, D.C. - On Friday, Representative Ron Paul sent a letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert requesting that the Speaker schedule a vote on H.R. 2068 before Congress adjourns for the year in October. H.R. 2068 is a bill that would make prescription drugs available through Medicare. Paul said passage of the bill is critical if Congress is to keep its promise of affordable quality health care for working Americans when they retire. "While there are different plans to provide access to prescription drugs, I believe most members of Congress agree that a Medicare prescription drug plan should ensure senior citizens the maximum amount of choice and control over their health care," Paul stated. "We need to pass this legislation so that seniors will have access and choices when they need prescription drugs." Government-funded individual medical accounts, or "Medicare MSAs," were created as part of the Medicare+Choice program. They were designed to allow seniors to control their Medicare dollars through use of a special account. Funds in the account may be used for routine medical expenses and prescription drugs, while other portions of the Medicare program cover non-routine expenses such as major surgery. Currently, however, these accounts are available only to a limited number of Medicare recipients. HR 2068 simply would extend the Medicare MSA program to all seniors. "Under this plan, the choice of whether to use Medicare funds for prescription drug costs is made by seniors, not by bureaucrats and politicians- it is completely voluntary," Paul continued. "The government should not be making seniors' health care decisions for them. I urge my colleagues in Congress to join me in promoting this legislation which gives control over Medicare dollars to patients and doctors."

